



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK



STIMSON



Partnering for peace: private sector solutions to harness local renewable energy for peacekeeping

High-Level Political Forum, 12 July 2021, 13:00 to 14:30 pm (NY)

The United Nations Secretariat has committed to 80% renewable energy by 2030, a goal which hinges largely on the ability of peacekeeping missions to obtain solar, wind, hydro, and other forms of renewable power from local sources. This event – hosted by the Permanent Missions of Norway and the United Arab Emirates to the UN, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), and Powering Peace (a partnership between Energy Peace Partners and the Stimson Center) – presents the latest examples from the field on how missions are engaging private sector companies to meet their power requirements, as well as the implications for host communities.

Energy procurement from local power producers relieves missions of the high upfront capital investment required of constructing UN-owned renewable energy infrastructure, and it would allow mission budgets to pivot away from diesel to renewable energy suppliers – theoretically at a lower cost given diesel's premium to renewables. This model of procurement allows peacekeeping missions – often among the largest energy producers and consumers (and source of greenhouse gases) in the regions where they're deployed – to serve as anchor clients for private sector developers, facilitating local renewable energy development and expansion of energy access.

Drawing on perspectives from senior mission leaders and power company executives, the event assesses what approaches deliver these potential cost, security, host community and climate benefits from private sector power sales to the UN, and how both missions and companies could scale and enhance cooperation. The event will then outline a limited number of key deliverables to facilitate public-private partnership toward the 2030 goal.

The event is part of a series of workshops and panels in 2021 and 2022 on renewables implementation in specific security contexts and broader UN peace operations.

Background

UN peace operations are almost exclusively powered by diesel – roughly 95% of mission electricity supply. This diesel use accounts for a significant share of global peacekeeping costs and the majority of UN greenhouse gas emissions. Diesel supply lines are also a significant security vulnerability, both subject to attacks and severe weather events and disasters.

The cost of solar power has fallen more than 80% in the last ten years and is now cheaper on average than diesel in every country in which UN peacekeeping missions operate, according to the International Renewable Energy Agency. Other renewable sources like hydropower and wind are also competitive with diesel energy on cost. The favorable economics, supply chain advantages, and global push for climate action have prompted the UN to set an 80% renewable energy target by 2030 under the UN Secretariat Climate Action Plan (UNSCAP), linked to phase two of the Department of Operations' (DOS) Environment Strategy for Peace Operations.

As an alternative to building and operating its own renewable energy plants, with high upfront costs that pose a challenge for short-term funding cycles, missions are beginning to look to the private sector to provide power sales. In the DRC, the mission has been able to connect to established local hydro powered utilities, shifting some of field sites away from diesel generators. In Somalia, the mission has partnered with renewable energy developer to build a solar project that will support both the UN and the local grid. In both cases, UN peacekeeping operations are reliable and creditworthy energy off-takers with sizeable energy load, representing a one-of-a-kind client in the local market. Power purchase agreements (PPAs) between the UN and a private sector power company often allow the company the financial security to survive and grow.

Agenda

Moderated by Victoria Holt, Vice President, Stimson Center

10 min	<p>Welcome and objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Nawal Al Hosany, Permanent Representative of the UAE to IRENA • Hans Olav Ibrekk, Special Envoy, Climate and Security, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
15 min	<p>Overview of peace mission experiences to date</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christian Saunders, Assistant Secretary-General for Operational Support, United Nations • Francesco La Camera, Director-General, IRENA • Dave Mozersky, President, Energy Peace Partners
40 min	<p>Perspectives from the field</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • James Swan, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG), United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) • Bintou Keita, SRSG, United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) • Mads Uhlin Hansen, CEO, Kube Energy • Emmanuel de Merode, Director, Virunga National Park
20 min	Participant interventions and Q&A
2 min	Wrap-up and next steps

Registration and participant profile

Please register via <https://bit.ly/3vX54be> to receive the event link. The event is targeted at

- Member States, particularly members of the UN Security Council; host countries of UN peace missions; troop-contributing countries; and members of the Groups of Friends on Environmental Management in the Field, Sustainable Energy, and Climate Change
- UN peace operations leadership and staff
- UN country teams and UN staff involved in UNSCAP, the DOS Environment Strategy, and energy/climate issues
- Power companies operating in peacekeeping mission host communities
- Broader peace operations community